

Preface

This book arose as the unexpected product of the efforts of numerous Chinese women to explain to me the changes in their lives during the reform era, as well as the changes in the role of the official women's movement in China from the late 1980s. I have attempted to listen closely to their voices, but I expect they will find my views remain some distance from their own. I hope, nevertheless, that they will read in these pages faithful accounts of their resourcefulness in working under challenging circumstances to improve the lives of women in rural China.

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Within Canada, writing began while I was a Visiting Scholar at the Centre for Research in Women's Studies and Gender Relations (which also granted a research allowance) and at Green College, University of British Columbia. I benefited from office space and a collegial environment in the Department of Anthropology and Sociology, University of

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I remain solely responsible for the interpretations presented here and for all remaining shortcomings in this study.